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Office Chief Commissary U. C.,

GREENSBORO' SEPT. 14TH, 1861.

*To the Officers and Agents of the Subsistence Department in the State of North Carolina :*

I most respectfully call your particular attention to the annexed Circular of the Commissary General, approved of by the Hon. Secretary of War :

This Circular sets forth the Laws regulating Impressments in certain cases, the duties and responsibilities of Bonded, detailed and exempted Agriculturalists, (who, in the language of said Circular, are considered "*as much in the service as they would have been if not conditionally exempted,*") and the penalty of non compliance on their part with a strict and faithful performance of the conditions and obligations of their Bonds.

It also sets forth certain duties which it is expected and required of the Officers of this Department faithfully and diligently to keep and perform ; not the least of which (as set forth in last paragraph of the Circular,) is to report all persons liable to military duty who have been exempted or detailed from such service, *for any purpose whatever*, whenever found engaged in speculating in articles of Army Subsistence, or engaged in any other business prejudicial to the interests of the Government.

I am, very respectfully, your most obt serv't,

JAMES SLOAN, Maj. & Chief C. S.,

for the State of N. C.

C I R C U L A R .

Confederate States of America, Subsistence Department,

RICHMOND, SEPT. 5TH, 1861.

When enacting laws for impressment, Congress could not have expected impressing officers as a class, to be competent to settle the meaning of the word value or just compensation, since Jurists and Political Economists have been unable to determine on a definition, or principle of ascertaining the just value of an article. Under these circumstances, Congress enacted that Commissioners jointly chosen by the Confederate and State Executives, should at intervals fix the value of commodities, as the best mode of settling what was just compensation ; and thus fulfilling the constitutional requirement in cases of impressment. The schedules fixed by these Boards for the respective States monthly, were objected to by certain parties, and the objection sustained on the ground that value at the time of an impressment could not be determined by rates fixed anteriorly : consequently, in any case of impressment, whether of property in the hands of speculators or producers, the appraisement by neighbors selected by both parties is required ; and either party, if not satisfied with the award, can appeal to the Joint Commissioners.

In cases where one half of the meat which a party had secured for the subsistence of those dependent on him, was impressed, in accordance with the law promulgated in General Order No. 39, the necessity of promptly supplying him with an equivalent, settled the principle that just compensation required the local cost of the article, and such appraisement by neighbors mutually selected, was made final without appeal.

Whenever the local appraisement of a man's surplus exceeds the price fixed by the last schedule of the Commissioners in the State, by an amount more than to be understood by any superiority of the special articles to the ordinary standard, and no extraordinary changes in the condition of the country have occurred since the last schedule was fixed ; then the Impressing Officer is advised to appeal from the local appraisement to the Commissioners, as the legally appointed tribunals to settle value, and as in the order of reason the most competent, they having been constantly studying the circumstances which might modify conclusions on this mooted question.

When a party refuses to give information to an Impressing Agent who exhibits his credentials, the officer shall apply to the officer in charge of the nearest reserve organization, who will be required to enable him to examine into the stock of supplies in the possession of the party refusing information.

When notice of impressment has been given, and the business is only awaiting settlement, if the holder, instead of retaining it for the Government, refuses to deliver it or disposes of it otherwise, then the same reserve force shall be invoked, and the impressed property seized, or an equal quantity taken from the party, on the ground that he has not alienated what was the Government's, but what he considered his own.

Officers will proceed to impress all the supplies available as rapidly as they can.

Bonded agriculturalists are as much in the service as they would have been if not conditionally exempted. Whenever one of these is found bartering any of his surplus or selling any to others than the Government, or families of officers and soldiers, or at rates other than those prescribed, or is not strictly devoting his whole attention to the production of supplies, evidence of the fact must be at once furnished to the appropriate enrolling officer, and the name of the party and the enrolling officer sent to the Bureau of Conscription.—The District Attorney shall be furnished with the information preliminary to a prosecution of the offender on his bond.

Officers will also ascertain from the bonded farmers with whom they deal, the amount of meat they have contracted to deliver, and how much surplus subsistence they have, and see that one-half goes to the Government.

The Secretary of War will direct that the orders to the Enrolling Officers and Commandants of Reserves be given; also, that directions to the District Attorneys be sent to prosecute promptly all who have not fulfilled the terms of their bonds.

If any man liable to military service who has been detailed or exempted from such service for any purpose whatever, is found engaged in speculation in articles of Army Subsistence or engaged in any other business prejudicial to the interests of the Government, it is your duty as one of its officers promptly to report him.

(Signed)

L. B. NORTHROP, C. G. S.

Approved, (Signed) JAMES A. SEDDON, Sec'y of War.

OFFICIAL, S. B. BREWER, Major & C. S.

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